

Fantasy and Terror

number ten



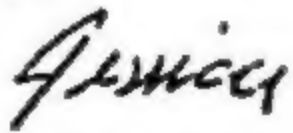
Fantasy and Terror

My sweet chums:

Here again is a selection of miniature stories, poems-in-prose, and verse regarding things morbid and fearful, gleaned from here and there, much of it exceedingly rare and old, many others spanking new, written as they were by discerning and talented members of the Subscription Roster who have been inspired to greatness. This is almost a "Seattle Feminist Issue" with shocking, sensual, gorgeous and eerie new works by Jules Faye, Cappy Kotz, Wendy Wees, plus some no-account fables of my own which the printer left out of a previous issue where they were originally intended for the inside back cover. Thanks to Richard Dalby who sent items by Victorian poet Ada Trevanian, about whom nothing seems to be known, though I included a tale of hers in my upcoming anthology for The Feminist Press WHAT DID MISS DARRINGTON SEE?: Feminist Supernatural Stories of the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Antequarians and weird tales enthusiasts will have noticed right away such authors as Mary Wilkins (whose collected ghosties are in print from Arkham House); S. Weir Mitchell who was the real-life prototype of the misguided physician in "The Yellow Wallpaper"; S. R. Crockett whose THE BLACK DOUGLAS is classic werewolf stuff and Scottish adventure; Robert W. Chambers with vignettes from THE KING IN YELLOW; and Emma Frances Dawson whose much-sought-after AN ITINERANT HOUSE had only 500 copies printed, most of them burnt in the San Francisco Fire, with one of the surviving copies in my own collection, thanks to Joseph Kennelly. Some Russian stuff, some French, top off the dish, all this to delight your darkest senses, and mine.

Write me in Seattle and let me know what you think of the issue, and feel free to send along rare old things you think appropriate, or writings of your own if you too are inspired to genius.

Doomfully yours, 
Jessica Amanda Salmonson

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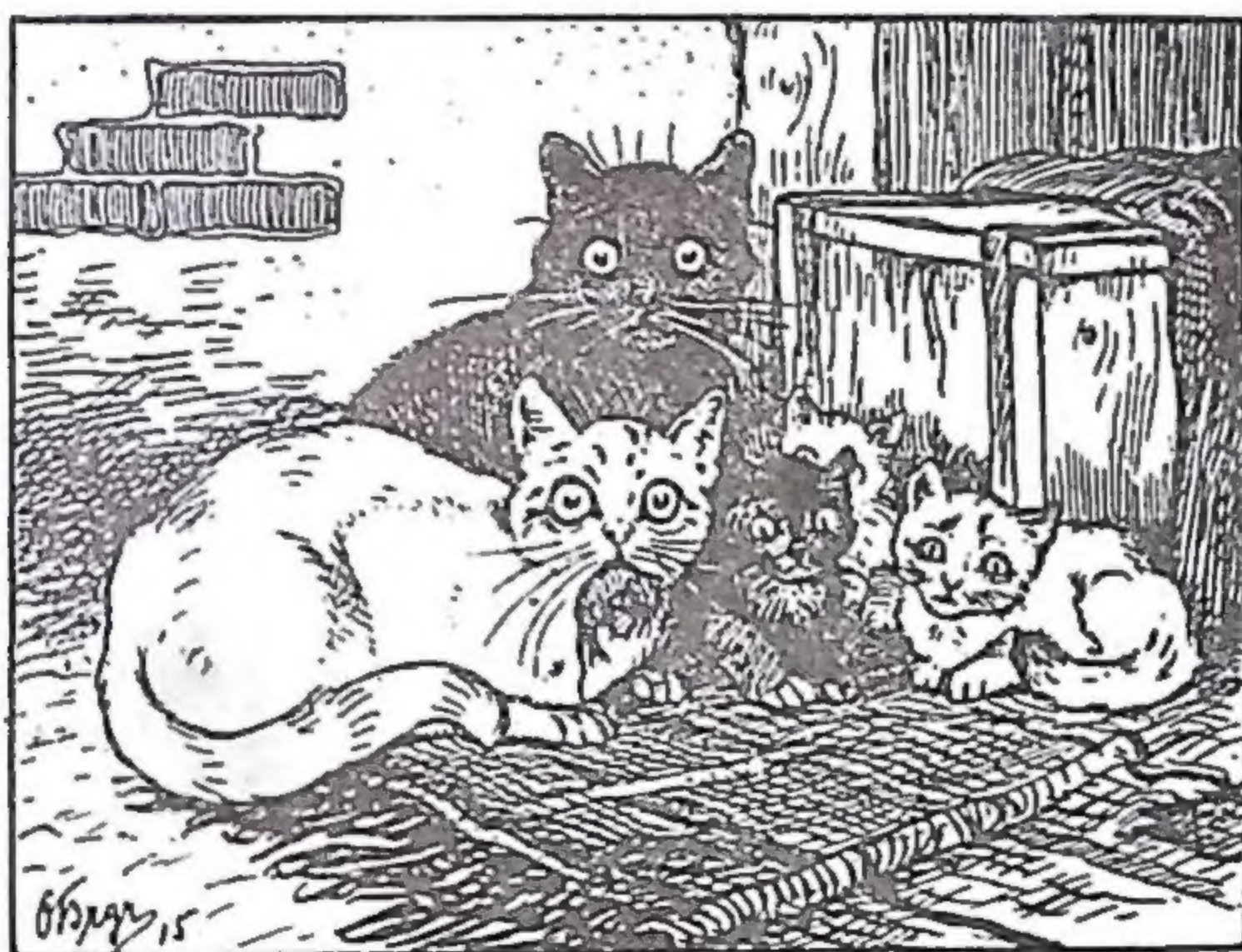
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3 am bound hand and foot against a dark stone wall, spread eagled; heavy leather straps lock around my throat and wrists, metal bars and rings chain my feet against hard, gray rock. Beating organs chafe against the cutting edge of bitter straps of hide; my heart is chained, my power, my sex enslaved. Tits are crushed in metal crescent disks, ripping into nipples, thighs wrenched and girded open leaving cunt exposed and spitting hostile. I cannot move, I cannot breathe. I clench my teeth against iron harness and poison the very air with the venom in my steel green eyes.

I am the living soul of the very structure I am trapped and soldered to. Its properties become my own. The tyranny of nail and spike hiss beneath the muscles of my back, the loathe of sharp toothed pinion recoil into shackled nests of womb and heart. The despairing chill of sharpened blade dominate with cutting precision throughout the visions of my mind. And I no longer know the quiet solace of innocence for it has been torn from beneath my feet and I rage to heaven for what I have become.

Then, before me, the dust and filth scattered across the floor swirl together, coupling in a furious whirlwind which rises into the fetid ceiling and within its roaring vortex stands my creator. She reveals herself to me loosely wrapped in black fur and luminous silver wings, dust dying at her radiant feet. She holds my eyes with her own and addresses me in a voice like storm clouds spilling over mountain peaks or wild rivers pouring out to quench the sea.

"You were born into and live within an historical context. This is what has shaped your life and tempered your heart and made you what you are. But now, my daughter, your destiny lies outside these trappings. You must learn to live and love without their familiar claims as a new born creature."

She reaches out a long and muscular arm and splits the collar tearing at my neck with one swipe of her razor sharp claws. It falls to the rotting floor with a clatter and lies like a dying rat as I cough and spit up splintered words. She then releases my heart and oceans of salted blood storm through my veins engorging me with a pounding pounding rhythm. And then her ancient and unconquered hand frees my power from its cruel bondage and as I gasp to fill my lungs a cold white light crashes through my body spilling out my chest and pulling like a moon against every wall, every corner, filling the chambered room with sharp restless brilliance. And when the stakes and rings which pierce and bind my sex, my lust are stripped away I can breathe at last, I can scream and I howl as roaring blood swells tits and thighs and gasping cunt and every muscle in my neck, my arms, my legs inflames, exploding shackles which had bound my wrists and ankles.

And I run howling from the room into wild woods tearing, screaming, devouring tree and beast and earth itself and drinking blood and piss of deer, of goat, of wild cat. Until finally exhausted I am sated and lying half buried in fur and mud. A slow smile stretches across my teeth and I laugh, really laugh for the very first time.

-Seattle

And in this dream you looked into the shadows of my face sidelong, your black eyes hungry with a wicked light that licked across the skin of my cheek, burning. And I bared my teeth in a smile of slow perversity answering the hunger dancing in your eyes, on your tongue, across the quiet muscles of your naked shoulders. A long moment passed between us yet no muscle relaxed and I began to see the green and amber pitch of your serpent's scales flex out and ripple across your heavy breasts and ribs and uncoil down the length of your spine. Your entire body opened like a waterfall cascading diamond shaped scales from your crown to the narrow tip of your winding tail and I watched you roll towards me in a clashing symphony of iridescent green, cobalt blue and fire opal.

As I turned to meet your thorny embrace, my raising shoulder blades exploded in a violent blaze and great silver wings shot up through flesh and fell in raven streaks against the wind. I leapt wildly at the midnight sky, moonlight catching in my feathered hair as the scars on my hands burst open to release coal black talons and I came crashing down in a full bodied fury against your writhing breast and locked your yellowed claws in a powerful grip. Feathers leapt like flames across my face searing down my back, below my belly, raging through arms and shoulders and burning into taloned fingers. I closed a burning palm around your throat and lifting your lips to mine I sunk my tongue along the cool whiteness of your sabered teeth.

But you would not be held. Unfurling arms and wings in a river of moist heat beneath my belly, you scratched your jeweled tits against my feathered nipples, sunk your dragon's teeth into my open wing and pierced the very pulse of my heart with your black black eyes. Up you flew, twisting hips and tail round my thighs as you lashed from beneath me. Grasping currents on the air with your fish-tail wings you tumbled me beneath the savage folds of your rippling skin. I beat my silvered wings, fanned my tail and screamed from the very pit of my throat as your tail bound me against the cold ground and you sunk your fist into the black blood of my cunt again and again and again, your long blue tongue sinking and rising from the pearly fluids.

And you drank and drank from the mouth of my sex until no blood was left to nourish, no voice to cast spinning into the stars above us and our bodies became parched of godliness. Scales and feathers vanished back into an older world and we lay woman's breast to woman's breast. Teeth, flesh and marrow of the bone remind us we are mortal after all and as you moved away I willingly conceded to your victory. But silently I swore that I would hunt for you across the city nights and when I found you I would take what I had come for. And there would be no warning.

-Seattle,
Washington

Everyone wants to talk to me. I can tell. It's because I'm near Death. They see I'm almost one of the Angels. I'll be walking down the street and strangers look at my face. My cheeks are hollow, my watery blue eyes sunken. My translucent ivory skin is taut. I am without blemishes. I am lovely.

I am the most elegant stick person. My head sits atop the thinnest of necks. On cold windy days I wear a heavy overcoat and put stones in the pockets so I will not blow away.

The passersby love me. They step aside. They smile and tip their hats. The merchants run to the doorways of their shops to see me go by. If they are busy with a customer they will look up as I pass and say, "It's Lady Death. How thin she has become. She no longer buys from me. Her time must be soon."

And it is so. I no longer patronize the shops as I used to do. When I was more a part of this world than not, I would buy fancy laces for my shoes or hair ornaments for my lovely hair.

I am bald now--the veins atop my head a beautiful pattern of blue rivers. I look at my reflection in the shop windows and see the "rivers" move. The ones closest to the skin gently pulsate. I raise my hand to touch them.

The shopkeeper sees me and waves. He approaches the door, but I move along.

I pass the candy shop. It's all glittery inside. Shiny surfaces. I used to buy milk chocolate heart-shaped candies. They were wrapped in bright red foil and sold only during the weeks before Valentine's day. I wished they were sold all year long. But now it doesn't matter.

The streets are more crowded than usual. The newspaper has written a story about me. "Lady Death Visits Exclusive Broadway Shopping Area." They have come to see me and I parade my stick body for them. It is the month of March now, the month I was born. The winds are getting stronger. I am becoming weaker. My overcoat pockets are filled with stones, but the strong winds jerk me about and cause me to dance and dangle on my toes as if I were a puppet. People step far aside from me now, afraid to become entangled in the invisible strings which pull me from the earth.

When I empty my pockets of the stones the winds will carry me to the heavens, and the angels will welcome me and kiss my hollow cheeks.

I look forward to that day; it will be my birthday. It will be quite soon.

-Seattle

3 cannot explain to you how it came to be that I let her enter my life. It is just so: Some come into one's life through open doors. Some come with open arms. Some come with closed fists. I receive all; embrace few.

I embraced Mousewoman. I believe it was her shiny silver whiskers, her slate grey eyes, her eyes so empty.

And, too, it was autumn. The rains had started. The leaves had fallen, brown and wet; the air heavy with decay.

Mousewoman, so frail, a vagabond; crooked nose and tiny pointed chin. How dare she enter my life. She came and left only to return again and again. And always she came with open arms and I embraced her.

I loved Mousewoman, loved her dearly, though I never quite knew her. We slept away the quiet autumn nights together. Sometimes we lit candles. Sometimes we burned incense. There was warmth and comfort between us during those long nights.

But when winter came, on the longest nights of the years, she would disappear, scurrying down some dark path searching for what God only knows. To say she found something or someone would be a lie, for always months later she would be at my door. And we would embrace.

But there came a time when more than two autumns passed and Mousewoman did not show up at my door. This was my reclusive time. I locked my front door never to receive a friend or stranger. I would go down the cellar stairs and through the cellar door to make my connections with the outside world.

The last time I saw Mousewoman was in passing. I was going to buy chentrels in the marketplace. They had been our favorite autumn meal. She, too, was in the market. She was visiting with the sachet lady oohing and ahing over the packets of rose and lavender.

We had a pleasant chat. She told me she could not afford chentrels this season. Her arms and legs looked so fragile. She said she was as poor as a churchmouse. In fact, she was spending most of her time in the various Catholic churches throughout the city. She found the statues morbidly friendly. And she spent much of her time and all her money in the hosiery departments of large stores. She said she was obsessed with the appearances of feet; how everyone in the city lacked artistic credibility, and this could be judged by the total lack of concern for color and texture, from the knees down.

Of course I noted and complimented her on her fine foot attire. It was true. From her knees down she was truly an artist. That particular day she wore a beautiful pair of grey crocheted stockings atop black tights. The grey was patterned with leaves twining up her calves. Over these she wore lavender anklets with tiny embroidered cowboys. Possibly a bit gaudy, she had loosely woven pastel ribbons through the upper part of the crocheted socks. And to these ribbons she had sewn bells.

She was lovely. I wanted to hug her, to tell her all would be well. But I knew this to not be so. And I never lie. Mousewoman died quietly in the church of St. Mary. I think of her from time to time. And sometimes, when I'm not writing or visiting with my new friends (I recently opened my front door) I go to Catholic Church and offer up a pair of crocheted anklets to her. And the plaster Mary looks down at me in a morbidly friendly way. And, too, she looks like my Mousewoman with tiny pointed chin, and on her feet she wears the printed polka dot socks I offered up many visits ago.

-Seattle

3 It wasn't a dream. I was trapped in my head and couldn't find any way out. There was a high frequency buzz and a multitude of crude bangings and pops; also a groaning sound like something was terribly overworked and about to grind to a halt. I knew I had to get out of there. I knew I would ultimately explode. All of those sounds were getting inside my cells.

Do you know what it feels like, cellular invasion? More than a million little voices chanting away in every conceivable part of your body. It's worse than being whispered about, behind your own back. Little voices in your knees whispering how you're going to fail, that you are steadily becoming rigid. Little voices in your stomach sniggling about how horribly fat you are.

I was trapped in my mind, in Headquarters, where cellular invasions are planned and carried out. I hadn't realised such subversive action was going on behind my eyes! I knew I had to get out and tell someone before it was too late, but I couldn't find a ladder. Everything was grey and slippery. Little guys shuttled ready made voices about on carts. I could hear them singing, "Gonna get you, Yeah, we're going to get you, gonna make you die from the inside out!"

I was getting numb. Something about the air, it made me sick. I felt lousy and extremely down on myself. I hated how my hands looked. I hated how cowardly I was, and there were these grey, snorting voices that tried to crawl through my skin like leeches going under. I started screaming. Those little guys trotting around only smiled smugly. I thought I was bleeding; I wondered if anyone could hear me, outside me. I wondered if my mouth was even open.

3 keep her locked up. I never let her out. I have her in a triple-walled room, steel enforced, with five locks on the door. No window; no, no window. I don't want her looking out. The room's soundproof, too. I've heard her voice is seductive, but I know that's false. She'd suck me dry if I gave her a chance; she'd fill me up with quivers and shakes. No, I don't even want to hear her breathe.

No one feeds her, but she continues to live. She must be older than Christ would be if he had lived. I know she's alive. I can feel her. That's the thing. I haven't figured out yet how to keep her vibes locked up. Sometimes I think she's standing over me in the dark, lurking, invisible, breathing. Breathing her sweet cloying fumes into my face. I wake up, afraid she's standing over me, and shriek, "You don't want me! I don't know how to love, I'm no good without that!" I cower in the corner, arms flung up around my head in protection. There's no sense in taking any chances. But then, it's never her. It's always just a dream.

A bad dream.

-Seattle

3 In its dress of the color of gall and poison, the corpse of my reason trails upon the Thames. Bronze bridges, where wagons clank with interminable noises of hinges, and sails of dark boats, let their shadows fall upon it. With no movement of hands over its clock face, a great belfry, masked with red, gazes at it as though at someone immensely sad and dead.

My reason is dead from too much knowledge, from a too great desire to shape the motive of every being and every thing, and place it upon a black granite pedestal. It died atrociously, of a clever poisoning; it died also of a mad dream of an absurd and red empire. On the illuminated evening of a festival, when it felt this triumph float, like eagles, over its head, its nerves gave way. It died when it could no more feel ardor and aching desires. And it killed itself, infinitely exhausted.

All down the length of mournful walls, the length of iron factories where hammers boom like thunder, it trails to the funeral.

There are wharves and barracks, always wharves with lanterns—slow and motionless spinners of the dim gold of their lights. There are the dreariness of stones, a brick house, a black jail, whose windows, like dull eyelids, open to the evening fog. There are great insane dockyards, full of dismantled ships and yards quartered against a sky of crucifixions.

In its dress of dead jewels, which celebrates the hour of purple at the horizon, the corpse of my reason trails upon the Thames.

It goes toward the perils in the depths of shadow and fog, to the long hollow sound of the tolling of heavy bells breaking their wings at the corners of towers. Leaving unsatisfied behind it the immense city of life, it goes toward the black unknown, to sleep in the graves of evening, far away, where the slow and powerful waves, opening their endless caverns, swallow the dead forever.

-Belgium
tr. Amy Lowell

WITHIN THE MASTABA
OF AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS

Margaret Tod Ritter

τ The serdab's fifty paces yawn
Nigrescent to the sun-dimmed sight;
An effigy, slim, sovereign,
Looms slowly on the bastard night.

Within a near sepulchral hall
Glimmers this girl's sarcophagus—
Chryselephantine, pearl and fire,
Its least anthemion fabulous.

The tears of those who mourned her dead
Flowed out from proud, barbaric thrones;
Pending her soul's return from Hell
They mummified her sinless bones.

-1921

ORCHIL

Fiona Macleod

I dreamed of Orchil, the dim goddess who is under the brown earth, in a vast cavern, where she weaves at two looms. With one hand she weaves life upward through the grass; with the other she weaves death downward through the mould; and the sound of the weaving is Eternity, and the name of it in the green world is Time. And, through all, Orchil weaves the weft of Eternal Beauty, the passeth not, though its soul is Change.

This is my comfort, O Beauty that art of Time, who am faint and hopeless in the strong sound of that other weaving, where Orchil, the dim goddess, sits dreaming at her loom under the brown earth.

NOCTURNE

Fiona Macleod

By dim mauve and dream-white bushes of lilac I pass to the cypress alley, and to the mere which lies breathless in the moonshine. A fish leaps, a momentary flame of fire. Then all is still again on the moonlit mere, where, breathless, it lies beyond the cypress alley. In the vague moonshine of the cypress alley I pass again, a silent shadow, by the dim, mauve and dream-white bushes of lily.

THE REED PLAYER

Fiona Macleod

I saw one put a hollow reed to his lips. It was a forlorn, sweet air that he played, an ancient forgotten strain learned of a shepherding woman upon the hills. The Song of Songs it was that he played: and the beating of hearts was heard, and I heard sighs, and a voice like a distant bird-song rose and fell.

"Play me a song of Death," I said. Then he who had the hollow reed at his lips smiled, and he played again the Song of Songs.

THE TWO ETERNITIES

Fiona Macleod

Time never was, Time is not. Thus I heard the grasses whisper, the green lips of the wind that chants the blind oblivious rune of Time, far in that island-sanctuary that I shall not see again.

Time never was, Time is not. O Time that was! O Time that is!

-1896

THE ARTIST

Oscar Wilde

One evening there came into his soul the desire to fashion an image of "The Pleasure that Abideth for a Moment." And he went forth into the world to look for bronze. For he could only think in bronze.

But all the bronzes of the whole world had disappeared; nor anywhere in the whole world was there any bronze to be found, save only the bronze of the image of "The Sorrow that Endureth for Ever."

Now this image he had himself, and with his own hands, fashioned, and had set on the tomb of the one thing he had loved in life. On the tomb of the dead thing he had most loved had he set this image of his own fashioning, that it might serve as a sign of the love of a man that dieth not, and a symbol of the sorrow of man that endureth for ever. And in the whole world there was no other bronze save the bronze of this image.

And he took the image he had fashioned, and set it in a great furnace, and gave it to the fire.

And out of the bronze of the image of "The Sorrow that Endureth for Ever" he fashioned an image of "The Pleasure that Abideth for a Moment."

THE DISCIPLE

Oscar Wilde

When Narcissus died, the pool of his pleasure changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, and the Oreads came weeping through the woodland that they might sing to the pool and give it comfort.

And when they saw that the pool had changed from a cup of sweet water into a cup of salt tears, they loosened the green tresses of their hair, and cried to the pool: "We do not wonder that you should mourn in this manner for Narcissus, so beautiful was he."

"But was Narcissus beautiful?" said the pool.

"Who should know better than you?" answered the Oreads. "Us did he ever pass by, but you he sought for, and would lie on your banks and look down at you, and in the mirror of your waters he would mirror his own beauty."

And the pool answered: "But I loved Narcissus because, as he lay on my banks and looked down at me, in the mirror of his eyes I saw my own beauty mirrored."

-c1896

SAD LADY DEATH

Jessica Amanda Salmonson

Lady Death, duty bound, carries on
and though she knows no river flows forever
and no mountain touches stars
and every beast is prey
still,
hers is not a chore from which she
garners grave pleasure.

Lady Death treads the ground, harried on
arms flinging wild. Neither the old
nor unborn child are free from killing blows.
Without her at her task the world would be
catastrophe; not in this is solace found.

And so she weeps the while she reeps
It cannot go undone.

(c) 1984

There is a little garden full of white flowers before this house, before this little house, which is sunken in a green hillock to the lintel of its door. The white flowers are full of honey; yellow butterflies and bees suck at them. The unseen wind comes rushing like a presence and a power which the heart feels only. The white flowers press together before it in a soft tumult, and shake out fragrance like censers; but the bees and butterflies cling to them blowing. The crickets chirp in the green roof of the house unceasingly, like clocks which have told off the past, and will tell off the future.

I pray you, friend, who dwells in this little house sunken in the green hillock, with the white flower-garden before the door?

A dead man.

Passes he ever out of his little dwelling and down the path between his white flower bushes?

He never passes out.

There is no chimney in that grassy roof. How fares he when the white flowers are gone and the white storm drives?

He feels it not.

Had he happiness?

His heart broke for it.

Does his heart pain him in there?

He has forgot.

Comes ever anybody here to visit him?

His widow comes in her black veil, and weeps here, and sometimes his old mother, wavering out in the sun like a black shadow.

And he knows it not?

He knows it not.

He knows not of his little prison-house in the green hillock, of his white flower-garden, of the winter storm, of his broken heart, and his beloved who yet bear the pain of it, and send out their thoughts to watch with him in the wintry night?

He knows it not.

Only the living know?

Only the living.

Then, then the tombs be not for the dead, but the living! I would, I would, I would that I were dead, that I might be free from the tomb, and sorrow, and death!

-1892

Holding a new and regnant sceptre,
The palest lily of the year,
She gave all glances that o'erswept her
A sudden smile, a sudden tear.

The smile to think the daylight shed
Upon so fair a thing terrestrial;
The tear because as soon she fled
On starry paths to the celestial.

-1872

THE SNAKE BICYCLE

Greg Boyd

He knew it would happen sooner or later. His wife has left early and his car won't start. So he's got no choice except to unlock the garage and ride the snake bicycle to work. Though it's not supposed to be slimy, he knows it will be. Worse, the dust on the slime gets all over his suit pants as he pedals. Wobbling down the driveway on flat tires, he thinks, "I'll never get far on this." So he turns around and parks the bike in front of the house. Inside, he goes to the bedroom, opens the cage of his dresser, and pulls out the last of the white mice.

-Mission Hills, California

DAWN TIGERS AND NIGHT DEATH

Vonnie Crist

Dawn bares her steely claws & rips open the tender grey underbelly of a huge beast. Bloody entrails dribble out of the dark-as-ink abdomen. Her needlefangs tip off the hide revealing a heart, red & nestled in glinting meat, still palpitating. She eats until her lean striped form bloats to gold proportions. Every drop of her breakfast consumed, her hunger sated, she snarls & challenges all starving creatures to reach for the banquet feast. Then with a ripple of raw power, she leaps for white clouds.



-Jarrettsville, Maryland

THEY

Fedor Sologub

We could see them if we liked to, though they are not at all as we are, and almost do not notice us. How indeed can we interact with them?

Once I caught sight of one.

It was evening, and I was together with my sadness in the silent embrace of my walls.

The minutes burned, because I did not yet know how to extinguish their consuming flame.

And my reverie struggled helplessly on the yellow, shining boards of my floor.

The objects importuned me, and I believed them.

Then there was one brief moment . . .

Oh, if I could only find the words to describe him!

Everything visionary, everything habitual was lit up by his light, and departed from my attention—and there fell on me his unspeakable glance.

And answering my dread, he merely said to me:

"Do not be afraid."

Then again the time came on, and the objects once more bewitched me.

-tr. John Cournos, 1917

MEDUSA

Louise Bogan

3 had come to the house, in a cave of trees,
Facing a sheer sky

Everything moved: a bell hung ready to strike,
Sun and reflection wheeled by.

When the bare eyes were before me
And the hissing hair—
Held up at a window, seen through a door,
The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead
Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now,
Nothing will ever stir;
The end will never brighten it more than this
Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall and will not fall,
And the tipped bell make no sound.
The grass will be always growing for hay
Deep in the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow
Under the great balanced day
My eyes on the yellow dust that was lifting in the wind
And does not drift away.

-The New Republic, 1921

THE MOUNTAIN OF LASTING PEACE

Thomas Wiloch

7 When the Princess Aphelia died of the Royal Fever (a malady afflicting only the fortunate), she was laid to rest atop the Mountain of Lasting Peace. To honor her great beauty, a garden of fabulous flowers was planted about her, arranged in designs that mimicked the constellations. To preserve her beauty, she was laid in a sealed coffin of delicately etched glass. And to keep away her many admirers (one of whom—it was never known which—had passed along the deadly fever), the road to the mountain's summit was blocked with boulders. Her spirit would dwell eternally near heaven, the ancient priests explained, while within her glass coffin her worldly form might forever decorate her unattainable garden.

And so centuries passed with no man disturbing the Princess Aphelia.

But one day a village lad named Catafan decided to climb the Mountain of Lasting Peace. The stories told of the great beauty of the hidden princess and the uniquely fashioned coffin in which she

could be seen. He vowed to be the first of his people to see these sights for himself.

Because of the precautions taken by the ancient priests, it was only by scaling a sheer precipice that one might attain the mountain's peak. And so Catafan arose one morning and began to climb. All that day he climbed, pulling himself higher and higher up the bare face of the mountain wall. It was no easy work for a village lad, but the thought of the Princess Aphelia, radiant in her glass coffin, spurred him on. At sunset he reached the summit.

He lay for a time upon the cold rocks, catching his breath and resting the sore muscles of his arms and back. Soon he stood and looked about him. The mountain's summit was filled with brilliant foliage. Exotic flowers from a thousand lands intertwined their petals and vines in intricate and wondrous designs of pulsing color. A passing breeze caused ecstatic tremors to move within the garden, and the blossoms nodded and swayed around him, brushing against him with seductive urgings.

In the midst of this garden was the glass coffin. Nestled within a giant white flower, the coffin shone in the scarlet rays of sunset like a faceted jewel. Catafan approached the coffin, stepping on a spongy petal of the flower it rested upon and walking closer. The princess lay upon a pillow of the palest yellow to highlight the golden luster of her long trellised locks. Her gentle face was smooth porcelain and seemed to exude a soft inner light of its own, like the moon on a cloudless night. Catafan gazed at the princess, overwhelmed by her beauty and the magical setting in which he found her. She was a stained glass window come to near-life and vibrating with an intensity of color and form.

It was while he stood there lost in wonder that shadows rose high into the air above him. The giant petals of the flower he stood upon were closing for the night, enwrapping the glass coffin like a precious stone in tissue paper. There was only a short, strangled cry as Catafan was enclosed and hidden from sight.

At dawn, the giant flower opened again. The Princess Aphelia and her sparkling coffin, now clear and shining in the morning light, were once again displayed to the empty blue sky.

For this is the Mountain of Lasting Peace, where the ancient priests have placed the Princess Aphelia to rest forevermore in undisturbed splendor.

-Canton, Michigan

THE SILENT ONE

Theodosia Garrison

¶ The moon tonight is like the sun
Though blossomed branches seen;
Come out with me, dear Silent one,
And trip it on the green.

"Nay, Lad, go you within its light,
Nor stay to urge me so.
'Twas on another moonlit night
My heart broke long ago."

Oh, loud and high the pipers play,
To speed the dancers on;
Come out and be as glad as they,
Oh, little Silent one.

"Nay, Lad, where all your mates are met
Go you the self-same way.
Another dance I would forget
Wherein I, too, was gay."

But here you sit long day by day
With those whose joys are done;
What mates these townfolk old and gray
For you, dear Silent one?

"Nay, Lad, they're done with joys and fears;
Rare comrades should we prove;
For they are very old with years,
And I am old with love."

-Lippincott's, February 1908

THREE SOULS

S. G. Trug

Three pale and timid shades approached
The blessed gates of Paradise,
And begged with frightened, low entreaty,
"Admit us, gateman, holy, wise."
And to a voice they humbly hearken
That asks them sternly who they are,
They that to bless'd abodes are coming
Midst darkness, from the earth afar.
"What were you there? In gallant battles
Did you through valor win the prize?
How lived you there? Through what achievement
Won you the holy Paradise?"

The first one said, "Life's battles thundered
In vain around me. All my life
Was full of prayer and adoration
And flowed in peace, eschewing strife.
I was a priest, and always preached I
To me the worth of good and love,
Extinguished shameful zeal of passion,
And lit the torch sent from above."

"With sword in hand," thus spake the second,
"Through all this world I boldly came,
And terror and destruction spread I
Upon the earth, like fiery flame.
My life was passed midst bloody battles.
But only for the just and weak
I raised my sword and rushed to combat,
In battles fierce my wrath to wreak."

"And your life's path, how was't illumined?"
 The great apostle asked the third.
 A groan of pain, profound and heavy,
 Scarce audible, was faintly heard.
 A voice all timid, weak and craven,
 "Mine?" weakly whispers in affright.
 "I know not...Darkness, damp and dreary...
 Deserted, cold, midst endless night...
 Strange windows there—and lit so brightly.
 Strange doors—and always locked so fast.
 And so through life...the days and even
 The nights in cold hunger passed.
 I prayed? Oh, no! I knew no prayers,
 I knew them not...nor knew I God.
 Nor aught recall, but hunger, darkness...
 Oh, look! I suffer, all downtrod!
 Ah, how I waited for this hour!
 Ah, how I yearned for death's sweet day!
 Admit me, let me enter now
 And warm myself in this bright ray,
 And fall asleep...let all be ended.
 Let peace and calm be my dear prize..."

"Aside, O priest and warrior," clearly
 Came from the gates of Paradise.

*-The Russian Review
 January 1907*

DAMNATION

A. R. Atkins

Oh! unfortunite soul, whose eyes have seen the suffering of many,
 See thee now the dim light of damnation massed.

Wherein hell-bound souls come forth to trial in glowing halls,
 Beg in Satan's court, knowing all mercy has passed.

And would give all for one kind word, where without hell echoes the
 Torments of souls deserving as he.

Then Lucifer plays his role, red in fiery cloak, he dips hand in
 cauldron,
 Opens fuming book, and reads life's history.

Cower, turn thy head in shame, thy misbegotten deeds
 Flail thee with sins laid bare before thee.

Would you dare hold head high? Could you deny that script read from
 Branded pages does not herald thy destiny?

Oh! unfortunite soul, whose eyes have seen the suffering of many,
 Must now bear thy own; in darkest eternity.

*—Albuquerque,
 New Mexico*

A man, larger than any imagination, is made of dirt. His back: miles wide, thick with soil the color of rich tea. On the tip of his nose dozens of cities are built; they are freckles to him. He never knows when people stroll on sidewalks there, when cars wrap around lightposts, when construction workers tear up yet another road. Oblivious to the little boys with soup spoons digging holes in their back yards. His navel? Bigger than the Grand Canyon, a thousand times so.

Only the millions and millions of people buried in his skin—these he can feel: their feathery bodies like lotion, vitamins soaking through his calves, into his throat. Okay—let's just say it's like the calling of birds, these dissolving bodies. (But even this is an odd analogy, the man knowing nothing of birds which are smaller than dust to him—just the buzzing of airplanes tumbling over the oceans of his blue eyes.)

Sometimes people in the cities climb to the forests that are his hair and cut them down. And when they burn those trees in their tiny factories it's as if little fireworks are going off in his head, as if little bees are singing under his scalp...

This is when the man chews fingernails with marble teeth, rocks side to side with huge and shuffling mossy feet.

When the giant man groans people in the cities say: "Close the windows, Marlene—I hear thunder."

-Albany, NY

Orders of them, and they just wander all day. They've come to this campus, they've no classes to attend—this day was made for floating.

Very quickly the professors' gaits appear lighter, more carefree. And indeed they are, for their feet have turned to chocolate. The farther they walk the more the sun melts their oxfords—soon all are dwarves, bodies cut off at the waist, zipping along wet sidewalks with greater and greater speed. It's not long before bearded heads with bifocals slide along like b.b.s on ice, bouncing down steps, leaving winding trails of slippery cocoa. Soon all that's left are those long wispy hairs used to comb over bald spots, the brown elbow patches from tweed jackets now floating in mahogany pools. Drifting everywhere are former educators, intermixing with one another until all the campus is one fat, toasted lake.

When the chocolate congeals the students take pizza-cutters and carve crude, life-size cutouts, similar in shape to those chalk lines police detectives draw around homicide victims. These are then scooped up with huge spatulas and set to rest in quiet fields for the remainder of the night.

By morning chocolate is transformed back into bones and flesh; with dew in their nostrils the professors rise up, rested, ready for another semester. And when the pain becomes too much they can look back, and remember: their eyeballs were once chocolate easter eggs, their nipples Hershey kisses; bowels chocolate yellow pudding.

-Albany

THE HALLWAY OF BROKEN MIRRORS

Thomas Wiloch

In the Hallway of Broken Mirrors there is a silent man who looks from one cracked reflection to the next, searching for a true image of himself. There is only the sound of his shuffling feet as he makes his way along the hallway. There is soft light, shadows, and gray dust.

The man remembers a past in which mirrors showed he was small and crippled, unable to stand. He remembers a past of giant mirror images showing him bloomed to great stature and importance. Now his glistening eyes peek through wrinkled folds of aged flesh. He shuffles along.

The hallway is eternal, they say, though each man walks it for a moment of time. Soon the man will disappear into the distant shadows and be a reflection no more. Then the mirrors of the hallway will reflect only themselves, creating endless echoes of shattered imagery. Until the next man shuffles through the shadows and the gray dust, peering into each mirror he passes.

THE LOCKET

Thomas Wiloch

It was a heart-shaped locket with two tiny hinges that permitted it to be opened like a book. Inside were places for two pictures. For years she had kept their pictures in the locket. When people asked about her lover she would open the locket and show his picture. She always wore it around her neck.

When he left her, she cried for days. She hoped at first that he might return to her. But as time went on she realized he would not come back. She was truly alone.

She opened the locket to remove his picture. But there were no pictures in the locket now. There was only a single drop of blood where his picture had been. And her own picture was now replaced by a single sparkling tear.

-Westland, Michigan

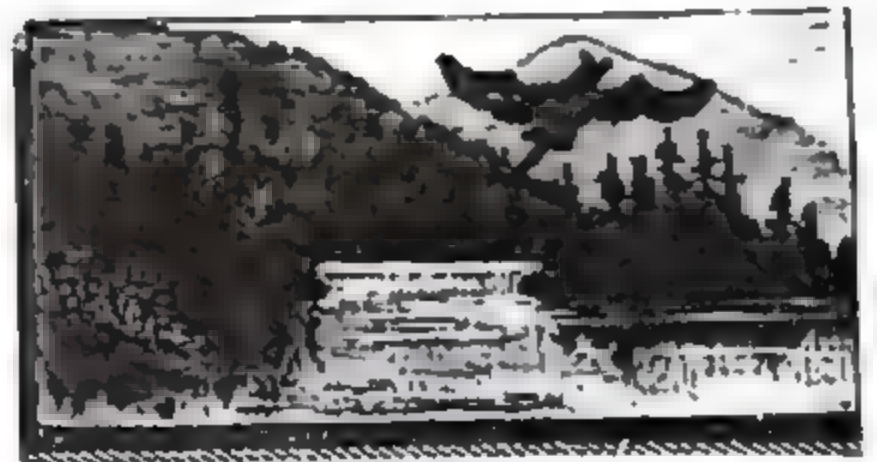
100 WAYS TO DIE

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I know a hundred ways to die.
I've often thought I'd try one:
Lie down beneath a motor truck
Some day when standing by one.

Or throw myself from off a bridge—
Except such things must be
So hard upon the scavengers
And men that clean the sea.

I know some poison I could drink.
I've often thought I'd taste it.
But mother bought for the sink,
And drinking it would waste it.



-1928

NOCTURNE

Charles Delchevalarie

Night reigns, with a tyrant's evil grip, over the sleeping town;
and the moon, surrounded by cunning clouds, seems to be the
hazy focus of a nebula of suffering.

The indulgent silence envelopes all and carresses a dark heap
of houses. Night, with its vampire wings, long and joyous, warms
scattered slumbers and its torpid breath rekindles the deceitful
flame of dreams at the brazier of hope.

The moon, strangled in its collar of haze, appears to be a
head that is bloodless, assassinated. Is it so distant that we
cannot hear its death-cry?

Suddenly, the mocking laugh of a street-wanderer calls out the
midnight carillon: "Sleep... sleep!" Then, in the quiet of
alcoves, dolorous shadows begin to stir, casting out nightmares
from their slumber.

And the moon, up high, has died of suffocation, without being
able to cry out its death.

*-translated by T. Ligotti,
from the Belgian journal LA WALLONIE, 1892*

THE GARDENER AND DEATH

Jean Cocteau

A young Persian gardener said to his Prince: "I met Death this
morning. She made a sign of warning. Save me. By some
miracle I should like to be in Ispahan tonight." The good Prince
lent him his horses. That afternoon the Prince met Death. "Why
did you make a sign of warning to our gardener this morning?" he
asked. "I did not make a sign of warning but a sign of surprise,"
she answered. "For this morning I saw him far from Ispahan, and I
am to take him in Ispahan tonight."

(b1889-d1963)

THE PIPES

Scott Urban

Somewhere in the house, a child screams: shrill, high, endless-
ly.

Prickly and chilled, I shoot up in bed, the sheets cloying shrouds.

Relieved, I realize it is but the ancient pipes, cranky plumbing,
protesting too much pressure.

Wiping off sweat, swearing off sleep, I stumble toe-achingly
through masoleum darkness to the bathroom.

The sink whines like a tortured pup. I viciously twist the HOT
handle.

The bathroom, myself, and my soul

Are drenched, dripping,

In red.

- North Canton, Ohio

How hard it is for a corpse among living men
To pretend to be alive and passionate!
But he must, he must squeeze himself into society, [bones.
Dissimulating, in the interests of advancement, the rattle of his

The living are asleep. The dead man gets up from his grave,
And goes to the bank, to the courts of justice, to the senate;
The whiter the night, the blacker his feelings,
And the pens creak triumphantly.

All the day the dead man works at a memorandum.
Office time is over. And lo!
Wagging his hind parts, he whispers
An obscene anecdote into the ear of a senator.

Evening. A drizzling rain has covered with dirt
The passers-by, the houses, and all the other rubbish.
But the dead man — towards other obscenities
He is whirled away in a rickety taxi.

Into a crowded and columned ballroom
He hastens. He wears a well-made evening suit.
He is greeted with a graceful smile
By the hostess who is a fool and her husband who is another.

He is worn out by a day of official boredom.
But the rattle of his bones is covered by the music.
He gives hearty shakes to friendly hands,
Alive, alive, he must pretend to be.

Only at a distant column his eyes will meet with those
Of his companion — like him, she is dead.
Behind their conventional small talk
You hear the real words:

"Weary friend, I feel strange in this ballroom.
Weary friend, the grave is cold.
'Tis midnight." — "Yes, but you have not yet engaged
N.N. for a waltz. She is in love with you."

And over there N.N. is passionately waiting
For him, for him, with all her blood ablaze.
Her face, maidenly beautiful,
Displays the idiotic ecstasy of live love.

He whispers to her insignificant things,
Words that are charming to the living,
And he looks, how rosy her shoulders are,
How her head has inclined to her shoulder:

With more than human malice he pours to her
The witty poison of ordinary society malice.

"How clever he is! How in love with me!"

In her ears, an uncanny, strange noise.

—It is bones rattling against bones.

(b1880-d1920)
tr. Prince Mersky

THE MOOR GRAVE

John Galsworthy

3 lie out here under a heather sod,
 A moor-stone at my head; the moor-winds play above.
 I lie out here In graveyards of their God
 They would not bury desperate me who died for love.
 I lie out here under the sun and moon;
 Across me bearded ponies stride, and curlews cry.
 I have no little tombstone screed, no: "Soon
 To glory shall she rise!" But deathless peace have I! -1912

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Ada Trevanian

3 t is the hour of twilight;
 Day's low-born cares are o'er;
 The void within my heart is fill'd—
 I am *alone* no more;
 For they are hovering near me,
 Who from earthly home are fled;
 This darkened room is peopled
 With the spirits of the dead.

I hear their gentle sighing,
 As mute, entranc'd, I kneel;
 Low music breaks upon mine ear
 And to my heart doth steal:
 Cool breezes fan my blanching cheek,
 And ease my aching head;
 I feel the holy presence
 Of the spirits of the dead.

They gather nearer, nearer;
 They kiss my tears away,
 And with shadowy arms encircle
 The weary child of clay.
 But, lo, the lamp's officious gleam!
 Each viewless wing is spread:
 They are gone; they all have left me,
 The blest, the faithful dead! -1858

PHANTOMS

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A ll look and likeness caught from earth,
 All accident of kin and birth,
 Had pass'd away. There was no trace
 Of aught on the illumined face,
 Upraised beneath the rifted stone
 But of one spirit all her own—
 She, she herself, and only she,
 Shone through her body visibly.

(1820-1894)

3 stood before a chain of beautiful mountains forming a semi-circle. A young, green forest covered them from summit to base.

Limpidly blue above them was the southern sky; on the heights the sunbeams rioted; below, half-hidden in the grass, swift brooks were babbling.

And the old fable came to my mind, how in the first century after Christ's birth, a Greek ship was sailing on the Aegean Sea.

The hour was mid-day. It was still weather. And suddenly up aloft, above the pilot's head, some one called distinctly, "When thou sailest by the island, shout in a loud voice, 'Great Pan is dead!'"

The pilot was amazed . . . afraid. But when the ship passed the island, he obeyed, he called, "Great Pan is dead!"

And, at once, in response to his shout, all along the coast (though the island was uninhabited), sounded loud sobs, moans, long-drawn-out, plaintive wailings. "Dead! dead is great Pan!" I recalled this story — and a strange thought came to me. "What if I call an invocation?"

But in the sight of the exultant beauty around me, I could not think of death, and with all my might I shouted, "Great Pan is arisen! arisen!" And at once, wonder of wonders, in answer to my call, from all the wide half-circle of green mountains came peals of joyous laughter, rose the murmur of glad voices. Everything before me burst into sudden laughter, brighter than the sun on high, merrier than the brooks that babbled among the grass. I heard the hurried thud of light steps, among the green undergrowth there were gleams of the marble white of flowing tunics, the living flush of bare limbs . . . It was the nymphs, nymphs, dryads, Bacchantes, hastening from the heights down to the plain . . .

All at once they appear at every opening in the woods. Their curls float about their god-like heads, their slender hands hold aloft wreaths and cymbals, and laughter, sparkling, Olympian laughter, comes leaping, dancing with them.

Before them moves a goddess. She is taller and fairer than the rest; a quiver on her shoulder, a bow in her hands, a silvery crescent moon on her floating tresses.

"Diana, is it thou?"

But suddenly the goddess stopped . . . and at once all the nymphs following her stopped. The ringing laughter died away.

I see the face of the hushed goddess overspread with a deadly pallor; I saw her feet grew rooted to the ground, her lips parted in unutterable horror; her eyes grew wide, fixed on the distance. What had she seen? What was she gazing upon?

I turned where she was gazing.

And on the distant sky-line, above the low strip of fields, gleamed, like a point of fire the golden cross on the white bell-tower of a Christian church That cross the goddess had caught sight of.

I heard behind me a long, broken sigh, like the quiver of a

broken string, and when I turned again, no trace was left of the nymphs. The broad forest was green as before, and only here and there among the thick network of branches, were fading gleams of something white; whether the nymphs' white robes, or a mist rising from the valley, I know not.

But how I mourned for those vanished goddesses! —Dec. 1878

IN SILVER UPON PURPLE

Emma Frances Dawson

"From no human equation can you eliminate that unknown factor, the most mysterious of all, the Unexpected."

Eidsummer and midnight in an Italian city in the sixteenth century. The narrow, crooked streets are dim and quiet. The purple dark above is strewn with worlds like silver sands, yet so solemn and mysterious one feels that they may form cabalistic characters, and dreads some consequence yet hanging in the stars.

A nobleman passes along the lonely streets toward the cemetery, followed by his page, who bears a torch and a basket of flowers. The torchlight casts glints upon the heavy gold embroidery of a sinister heraldic flower which wreathes the young gentleman's white cloak, and lets the white satin puffing in his slashed sleeves gleam, the gems set in the hilt of his rapier flash. The frosty plumes in his hat not above a refined, proud face. Many women have sighed, have wept, because he passed them without a glance. The stately elegance of the man himself is far more than his adornments. What could thwart the will of such a fine, majestic being?

Those shifting, silver sands, that dust of worlds, athwart the purple dark long-blown and blowing far!

"These milky blossoms," he muses, "are not white enough to match the purity of that fair girl who was to have been my wife. I ought to thank Heaven that I lose her only as the bride of Death. I could never have yielded her to any other bridegroom. My Beautiful! My Own!"

He will never know that she loved, even married, another. He moves haughtily toward that unforeseen but immediate, sudden fray in which he is to be killed.

Athwart the purple dark, long-blown and blowing far, those shifting silver sands, that dust of worlds!

The page tries to stride like his master, and longs to be the grown man who can do as he likes. The shadows leap from them, point at them, draw grotesque likenesses of them, crowd back and follow. Here is a lofty window, over which a fantastic gargoyle, half-demon, half-dragon, is lolling out its tongue, as if in derision, but a shadow closes its mouth, even cowl its head, and leaves its sharp claws, holding an open book, its coiled tail, by which it hangs from the room, without meaning. Below, in the open window, a girl of scarlet lips and bright eyes is leaning out into the summer night. Many men, with their hungry hearts in their eyes, have followed her to and from mass. What shall assail with stifling torment a creature of such-grace and charm?

Long-blown and blowing far, that dust of worlds, athwart the purple dark those shifting silver sands!

She sees the picturesque passing of knight and page. She knows their mission. She does not regret the death; her own lover was too much taken by that girl at the late masque. "I have been wrong not to let him know how his wooing has thrilled me," she thinks. "When he serenaded me the night before, I neither lighted my window nor flung down a flower. I will make amends now for my long neglect of him. I will embroider that old love-song he sang, for the border of the cloak he shall wear at our wedding. It shall be a sky-blue velvet, the border of satin, the five lines, the stems of the notes, the bars in silver, the notes of seed-pearls. With ropes of pearls and white plumes on his hat, how handsome he will look! His beauty is a melody, a harmony for the eye beyond any the ear ever heard! And its theme is Love!"

The purple dark, that shifting dust of worlds, those silver sands long-blown and blowing far athwart!

The serene night is too pitiful to let her feel any foreboding of ill, of news that dawn will bring of a triple tragedy tonight in the cemetery, any hint of the secret which will be such distress to her to know — that her lover has already married the girl whose beauty bewitched him at the masque.

An old nurse who has come from a palace in mourning, and whose black figure, thrown up by the circling rays of torchlight, is a blot on the paler darkness behind her, sees by the dancing flare the beatified girl in the window and the passing beneath of the jaunty, disdainful cavalier and his strutting, envious page. The lovely girl, with pink roses in dark curls shadowing her high forehead, wears deep rose-velvet, heavily embroidered with crystal beads, the bodice a glittering mass of them, like a vision, all for an instant, of tears she is soon to shed. The old woman has a vivid glimpse of her against a background of gold-colored tapestry. The gargoyle grins, its mouth gapes into mock laughter, then appears to hastily shut, as grim shadows close around the dreaming girl and pursue the departing cavalier.

"Now, afore Heaven! why couldn't they fall in love with one another?" the nurse mumbles. "Just as young and handsome as the others, and with the chinks! Yet these must go down through the ages, as they say, forever famous as the jilted ones! Nobody will be concerned about what they may have suffered. A dainty beauty, a brave gallant — they deserve a better fate. Poor County Paris! Poor Rosaline!"

The dust of worlds, those shifting, silver sands long-blown and blowing far athwart the purple dark!

—*An Itinerant House*, 1896

A GHOST OF GLORY

S. Weir Mitchell

[3] It was after dinner, and had just struck three bells. The ward-room of the *Oregon* was at its best. As I was not a navy man, but only a guest, all the sea-tales were let loose on me. They had been well salted through many voyages and perhaps through many centuries, but were always accepted as fresh.

At last there was a long pause, and the third-watch officer

ceased to punctuate the talk with twang of the banjo.

The doctor said: "Isn't it your turn now, Mr. Smith?"

I said, "Yes, I will tell you a short sea-story no one of you has ever heard."

The first lieutenant said that was incredible and bets of cigars were freely offered that it would prove an old fore-castle yarn.

I took all the bets and said I hoped there would be no musical accompaniment. Then some one took away the third-watch officer's instrument of torture, and I told my story.

"In 1864 I was sent by our government to Great Britain on a certain legal errand which has no connection with my tale. Having got through with a tedious business, I wandered about England and at last went to Scotland, where certain matters on the Clyde interested our people. For the purpose of hearing how the lower classes felt about the Civil War, I used to go of an evening into the inns in Glasgow where sailors collect, and take a pipe and a mug of ale.

"One night I fell in with a hairy old sea-dog just come ashore. A glass or two set him talking. After a while he asked me if I believed in ghost ships. I replied that of course I did; if we had ghosts on shore, why not on the sea?

"Well," he said, 'if you'd 'a' said no, I wouldn't have went on.' He did go on, and this is what my sailorman said:

"I was in a collier last week — that was June the 19th — runnin' up the coast. We were about eight miles off Flamborough Head. A Sunday mornin' it was, and just struck seven bells. It was rainin' solid and blowin' a gale; hadn't no reefs in the wind, nuther. I was on the bow lookin' out ahead. On a sudden the rain let up a bit, and there on the port bow, plain as this pipe, was the darnedest-lookin' ship I ever seed. She was all a wrack and half covered with seaweed. Her stays was half gone and sails tore and ropes hangin' about. I sung out to the mate to come quick, and he come, and the master and me, all three, seed her. At first the mate said she was a derelict. There was no one on deck, and she was havin' pretty much her own way. Might 'a' bin a quarter-mile away, or less; anyway, she was plain to be seen. The mate looked at her with the glass, and he said she had guns on deck and was a kind of old-time-lookin' war-ship. The queerest of all was, she had a flag at her mizzen; I saw it easy. It was like that damned Yankee rag, but didn't have so many stars. Just as the rain was a-thickenin' — now, don't say I'm a liar, 'cause I'm not."

"I gave that man my entire trust, and said as much.

"Well, just as she was gettin' dimmer, she began to let go with them guns. "My gosh!" says the mate, and save my heart, but we counted thirteen guns, one after another, and no time lost. Then the master he said he'd had enough and too much, and we went about. We didn't see her no more. I suppose you don't think I saw that ship. I wasn't in liquor, nor the mate nuther."

"And you heard the guns?"

"I did, and them guns was heard ashore, too. I know two men and a preacher heered 'em."

"After that my sailorman went away. I think the evidence good, because the man who saw the ship did not take it for anything except a strange sea-sight and because he could not have invented just that number of guns fired."

When I had told my tale the first lieutenant said: "That is a fine yarn, but what the deuce had the thirteen guns to do with it?"

Some of the others smiled, and the doctor said it was not very plain to him; such stories were common enough. The third-watch officer, who writes sea-songs and sonnets said:

"I don't think one of you got on to it. Why, that ship was the *Bon Homme Richard*."

"Yes," said I, "and log this too, you unimaginative sea-dogs. The *Kearsarge* sank the *Alabama* off Cherbourg, that Sunday morning, at what you call seven bells."

They agreed that it was a first-class sea-story and we were told of two other ghost ships, until at last the old engineer, who had retired into his beard and such a column of smoke as went before the Hebrews, remarked:

"It's good and it's true, but it's only half new. Mr. Smith has lost his cigars."

I asked for proof, and the officer replied:

"Here it is: Tom Bushby, our old quartermaster on the *Hartford* — he's laid by now at the Naval Home — Tom told me in 1850 that in 1812 he was a boy on the privateer *Rattlesnake*. They were before the wind and off that very same Flamborough Head. It was seven o'clock in the evening on the nineteenth day of August. There was no fog. As they were in hostile seas, the lookout was smart. This same ship was seen a mile away; she fired her thirteen guns, too. He said they tacked to get a clearer sight of her, but, somehow, she was gone. Tom said she just settled down and sank quietly under the smoke of her guns, and with that same old flag flying."

"Well, what then?" said the first lieutenant.

"What then? Why, just at that hour and on that day the *Constitution* disposed of the *Guerrière*."

"Bets lost, Mr. Smith," said the doctor.

The first lieutenant remarked skeptically that he would like to know whether in that last yarn there was any time-allowance for difference in longitude, as the capture of the *Guerrière* took place off the coast of Nova Scotia.

"Oh, don't!" said the gentleman who made verses. "You don't believe in anything."

"Yes, by Jove! I do."

"In what, sir? Trot out your creed. You don't own any one belief that isn't foggy with doubt. What do you believe?"

"I believe in the flag and in rapid-fire guns."

"Good!" said I. "Let's turn in."

And it struck four bells.

c1900

Editor's note: The *Constitution* is today still in naval service, the oldest continuously operated naval vessel in the world. -JAS

E he dead of a graveyard sat in their tombs, for now it was the feast of the Melad, when the dead are as alive and may walk the earth for a night, and neither the angel Moonkir questions, nor the angel Nekeer forbids.

But many missed their bones, and wailed with vain rattle of speech, till one, who was a miser, with dry laughter spake: "What need have I to walk? Here be my bones to sell." Then a woman gave for a leg bone a ring, and another a fillet of gold for a hand; and thus there was soon left of him only a skull, and to that skull some treasures. These others stumbled away rejoicing, and, as the muezzin sounded the first sunrise call to prayer, clattered into their graves. But at morning came down from the palms monkeys, and took the miser's skull for a ball. The gold and jewels a beggar found, and the fakir and Sufi speaker of verse, Ferishtah, who saw all this wonder, said, "As are the living, so are the dead."

CONVERSION

S. Weir Mitchell

A Sufi dervis, the father of sorrow and the son of grief, sat at night by the sea. The waves like sleek serpents writhed at his feet, and hissed forth, "Come, let us strangle thee and thy griefs, and make an end."

"Ah, welcome death!" he answered. Then a greater billow, rolling in, covered him, and went back, and the man was very wet. Thereupon he went home and dried his clothes.

HAROUN THE CALIPH

S. Weir Mitchell

Haroun the Caliph, walking by night in Bagdad, saw one standing without the great closed doors of the bazaar of the gold-workers with naught upon him but his frail khamees, and it was cold. "Who are thou?" said the Caliph.

"I am a merchant of amulets," returned the man. "I am starving, and I sold my coverings one by one, as a tree in autumn letteth a fierce wind have its leaves, rather than fall a heap and die. I am a child of misery from my birth."

Then said the Caliph, "Take this, eat, drink, and be merry," and he gave him the great ruby which men call the "Eye of Love," and went his way in peace. The next night Haroun came again, and, finding the merchant of amulets about to die for want of food, cried, "Alas! why did not you sell my jewel, and live?"

Then answered the dying man: "Some said it was false, some said it was stolen, and none would buy. It is as when Allah gives a too great gift of soul to a lowly man — it getteth him only the food of mockery. But now I have the amulet called death, and I shall no more hunger or care."

Upon this the man died, and the Caliph took the "Eye of Love" from the clutch of death and went his way hand in hand with thought.

— *Little Stories*,
1903

A most wonderful steam-machine,
 One time set up in China-land,
 Outdid the insatiate guillotine,
 For in three hours, you understand,
 It cut off a hundred thousand heads
 In a row, like hospital beds.

This innovation stirred a breeze,
 And some of the bonzes even thought
 Their barbarous country by degrees
 To civilization might be brought,
 Leaving Europeans, with their schools,
 Looking like fools.

The Emperor was an honest man—
 A little stiff, and dull of pate;
 Like other asses, hard and slow.
 He loved his subjects and the State,
 And patronized all clever men
 Within his ken.

His people did not like to pay
 Their taxes and their other dues—
 They cheated the revenue, sad to say:
 So their good ruler thought he'd choose
 As the best argument he'd seen,
 This sweet machine.

The thing's achievements were so great,
 They gained a pension for the man—
 The executioner of State—
 Who got a patent for his plan
 Besides becoming a Mandarin
 Of great Peking.

A courtier cried: "Good guillotine!
 Let's up and christen it, I say!"
 "Ah, why," cries to his counselor keen
 A Nero of our present day,
 "Why was not born within my State
 A man so great!"

*(Giuseppe Giusti, b.1809 d.1850, here satirizes the
 monarch Francesco IV, Duke of Modena, who executed
 not a few Italian patriots in 1831)*

"And I saw a rider on a pale horse." -Rev. vi 8
 Once, in a far-off time, there lived a Princess who was all that
 a Princess should be. Year in and year out she saw in her stone
 tower, waiting—waiting.

The sun shone and the wind blew, but the Princess heeded none of these things. Young trees sprang up round the castle and grew old and died, and new trees grew up in their turn, and very soon a thick forest surrounded the tower. The Princess was still young and beautiful, though her eyes grew more wistful as the years passed. The little brown mice ran about the floor and played "hide-and-seek" round her chair, and generations of spiders had woven a silvery lace curtain across the door.

And still the Princess waited.

Many Princes passed the castle, but it was so thickly surrounded by dark trees that they decided "it really wasn't worth while" to even try to enter.

One day the Princess felt strangely happy. "He is coming today!" she told herself. She smoothed her trailing white gown and wove a garland of red rambler roses for her long brown hair. Presently the sun went behind a cloud and the wind rose.

A stallion's hoofs clattered in the courtyard below, and, a moment after, someone bounded silently up the stone staircase, with long, cat-like steps. The Princess shivered. In the distance she heard a low rumble of thunder; the still air quivered before an approaching storm.

The Princess dropped her head. Suddenly she felt very tired.

She raised her eyes—the Prince had come then! He was in black velvet from head to foot and a long black velvet cloak swung from his shoulders.

The Princess did not see his face through her closing eyes, but she felt that it was very gentle and very kind. He carried her downstairs and set her, very small and tired, on his great white horse. Then, leaping up behind her, he galloped on to the highway and into the great Country that the poor little Princess had never seen—and so out of sight.

The little brown mice still play "hide-and-seek" and scuffle up the dust round her chair. There used to be a faded old rose-wreath, but that has turned to dust, too, by now.

-1919

THE SPIRIT

Laura E. Richards

A man was toiling, seeking, toiling, by hot sun and cold moon, with pickaxe and with spade; and as he toiled there came a bright Spirit, and looked him in the face, and smiled.

"Who are you, fair Spirit?" asked the man. And the other answered, "My name is Truth."

Then the man threw down his pick and spade, and ran, and brought costly robes and wrapped the Spirit in them; and set him on a throne, and bound him fast with chains of gold, and covered his face with a veil of precious web, and fell down and worshipped him. Happy man was he!

Now by and by as he worshipped a traveller came by the way, and stopped to look.

"Fair answer to your prayers, brother!" said the traveller.

"What God do you worship?"

And the man said, "The Spirit of Truth."

"Nay!" said the other; "how can that be? I met that spirit upon the road. Gipsying along was he, light-foot, light-clad, and over his shoulder a pickaxe and spade."

Then the man cried out in terror, and ran to the throne, and pulled the veil away, and tore the robes apart: and lo! the veil holding empty air, the great robes folding upon themselves, and the gold chains binding them.

-1906

THE VAULTS OF TIME

Charles J. Bayne

Those Vaults of Time! what do they hold
In their unmeasured amplitude?
Could their profundity unfold,
What scenes by mortals would be viewed?
O that those portals were unrolled
That human eye might once behold!

A passing angel gave the key;
And, opening those portals wide,
I saw mankind in each degree,
All dust—all dead—and side by side—
The high, the low, the slave, the free,
Commingle in mortality.

The vanished ages that had died
On weary wings were buried there;
I saw the spectral shade of Pride;
Saw Hope resolved into Despair;
Souls in the silence they defied,
And laurels, long since parched and dried.

A fatal atmosphere prevailed;
Earth's freshest blooms had gone to dust;
All light had glimmered, waned and failed,
And Love had come to be Disgust;
The flush of beauty had consumed
The downy cheeks it once illumed.

"Ye remnants of all things that were,
But are not! tell me, if ye may,
For all mankind's protracted stir
And feverish anxiety
Is nothing here but death?" I cried;
and echo answered, "Death!"—and died.

-THE WATER
SPIRIT'S BRIDE
1889

CATHLEEN'S GHOST

Ada Trevanian

The pale stars gemmed the welkin's vault,
Above the silvery breast of Dee,
And through night's mantling purple shed
A wavering light o'er land and lea,

When Edmond warmly, slumbering lay,
His dreams of Mary's fairy cot;
Then, sad and strange, a hollow voice
Said, "Edmond, is the past forgot?"

The hyacinth pealed from its bells
Low music on the cool night-air,
The white rose 'gainst the window-pane
Waved to and fro its branches fair;
And Philomel in floating moans
'Plained of her love from grove and grot;
But clear above all other sounds
That voice that came, "Is the past forgot?"

Three times it spake—then, with a start,
Edmond gazed round the dusky room;
The old prints glimmered from the walls,
The curtains fell in unchanged gloom;
But in thick gushes strove his breath,
And his bright locks stood up with dread,
When, turning, he espied the form
Of injured Cathleen near his bed.

Her face was like an autumn leaf,
Whitened and worn by chilling frost;
A misty shroud about her hung,
O'er which her lily hands were crossed,
The river's stain was on her brow,
All coldly heaved her bosom fair,
And ever, as she shivering sighed,
The wave dripped from her auburn hair.

"Oh! Edmond, it was dark and chill,
The night you turned me from your door;
There was no dwelling on the heath,
No shelter on the barren moor;
With maddening brain and breaking heart,
I plunged then 'neath the winding Dee,
And vainly hoped for rest in death,
But, Edmond, there's no rest for me.

"For three long nights and three long days
My drifted corse in earth hath lain,
Yet evermore my sheeted sprite
Is hurried swift o'er land and main;
I'm borne upon the moaning blast;
I'm tossed upon the surging sea;
My hair is wet, my shroud is damp,
But, Edmond, there's no rest for me.

"In the deep bowers where we have met,
Through the long meadows coolly green,
Down the lone vale, up the steep hill,
My weary wandering feet have been;

I'm known to every star which shines,
To every breeze which sweeps the lea;
My form is chill, my strength is spent,
But, Edmond, there's no rest for me.

"No rest—yet whereso'er I go,
Or soon or late, you too must come;
For your guilt is my lost soul's power—
Your heart, in death as life, my home."
Loud crew the cock, the phantom fled,
And the grey dawn o'erspread the sky;
But still young Edmond stirless lay,
With ashy cheek and straining eye.

From the cool chamber of the east
The wakened winds came sighing out;
The swallows twittered in the eaves;
The flowrets breathed their sweets about;
And the red sun all brightly rose
Above the rounded level plain,
And shone on Edmond's proud domains,
But for their own shone in vain.

Woe was in Whitram's halls that day,
And wild despair in Mary's cot;
For in the tapestried chamber drear,
Where the gold-purple light fell not,
With upturned face and ghastly stare,
And glossy curls in damp waves spread,
Upon his soft silk-curtained couch
The hamlet's youthful squire lay dead.

-1858

BAUDELAIRE	Eugene Lee-Hamilton
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A Paris gutter of the good old times,
Black and putrescent in its stagnant bed,
Save where the shamble oozings fringe it red,
Or scaffold trickles, or nocturnal crimes.

It holds dropped gold; dead flowers from tropic climes;
Gems true and false, by midnight maskers shed;
Old pots of rouge; old broken phials that spread
Vague fumes of musk, with fumes of slums and slimes.

And everywhere, as glows the set of day,
There floats upon the winding fetid mire
The gorgeous iridescence of decay:

A wavy film of colour gold and fire
Trembles all through it as you pick your way,
And streaks of purple that are straight from Tyre.

(b1845-d1894)

3 was roused from shallow, pain-ridden sleep by a thunderous noise from outside which shook the room.

Getting out of bed with great effort, I pulled my ailing body to the window, peered out into the moonlight night, and saw them: a large herd of ghostly horses rushing across the lawn. There were dozens of them, flowing like a gleaming tide; and the noise they made was frantic, furious, maddening. My legs trembled and my heart threatened to burst with joy—yes!—*joy!* The long, agonizing wait was over. My prayers had been answered—at last.

For many months, lying in my bed and suffering hourly from the torturous pain—which not even the most potent drug could take away—with my incurable afflictions, I had prayed to all the gods I knew, both benevolent and malevolent, to send whatever Deliverer they chose to carry me at last to my final reward—be it good or evil. Now I knew, as I watched the grim shapes rush recklessly across the grass, that my Deliverers had arrived. My hellish, pain-ridden days were over; now I would be borne away into the uncertain, but hopefully painless night of Eternal Oblivion.

Even as I watched, one of the magnificent creature detached itself from the main herd and trotted over to my window. It was a mighty stallion, awesomely pale, whereas the other horses seemed darker of color.

"I have never loved anyone or anything in this miserable life!" I confessed to the beast which had come to take me away. "My endless debaucheries left my body a tormented shell which imprisons me in the most agonizing pain imaginable, even in the depths of Hell. Take me with you into Oblivion!"

But the Pale Horse, gazing sternly at me, swung its head from side to side, and said in a voice as wrathful as an approaching storm:

"I shall return for you someday, after your suffering will increase a thousandfold. Oh, yes, I shall return for you—but not for a long, long time!"

-Wedgefield, SC

¶ The cork on the table smelled of new wine the night I met a ghost at the airport bar. Her spirit was stretched so thin that when she turned, cobwebs broke in the corners of the room. She told me her life, a history or two, and history is what you'd call it. Stone days on the road and rocky ones in harness. Men like serpents twined about her life line. Or did she have the hold on them?

Between the cracked ice and the laughter, the cigarettes and the drinks, more and more diaphanous, she disappeared that night at the airport bar. She took an unscheduled flight to the four corners of the world.

The cork on the table smelled of new wine. But ghosts never sniff corks.

-Berkeley

THE VOICES

Martha Haskell Clark

3 NEVER HEARD their voices till against my heart
I knew the stir of trustful-sleeping breath,
From baby lips that dreaming, curved apart
To smile secure at Want, and Woe, and Death.

But now in the night, I seem to hear them crying,
In the dusk, and the dark, the living and the dying:
(Oh, the smoke and the grime, and the little faces white!)
The million little stranger-souls in dingy hovels lying,
With tiny, clutching, wistful hands that grope against the
light.

I never heard their voices till upon my breast
And against the shielding hollow of my arm,
I felt the warmth of downy head soft-pressed,
That nestled mother-near and safe from harm.

But now in the night I seem to hear them pleading,
Unmothered, forsaken, the lonely and the needing:
(The little, wailing, stifled cries amid the dark alone!)
And hear the rudely jostling feet, uncaring and unheeding,
That pass and repass each darkened threshold-stone.

I never heard their voices till with helpless hold
Wee baby fingers folded fitful-tight
Upon my heart, and stirred its pulsing cold
To throbbing tear-wet tenderness within the night.

But now through the world, I seem to hear them crying,
The hungered, the fevered, the lonely and the dying;
(Forsaken little faces that haunt me in the night!)
The little, wan, unwelcome souls in reeking hovels lying,
With tiny clutching wistful hands that grope against the
light.

— THE HOME ROAD, 1924

THE INTRUDER

Mary Josephine Benson

3 DRANK AT your eyes and held the beaker
Of mine as you prayed, my spirit-seeker;
And Joy foamed high as Mount Romance
Till over your shoulder I caught a glance
Of Time with his blade — who cut the trance.

Ah, swift as the burst of Love's aurora,
He gloomed in the midst of the shining aura,
The Shadow, forelocked, toothless, grim —
A devil betwixt the cherubim —
That prayed us pause and drink to him!

— MY POCKET BERYL
Toronto, 1921

THEY MASKED me like a human child
 When I was very young,
 Bodice lacing straight and high,
 Staid skirts down-hung,

They taught me how to pace and praise,
 How to sit and smile
 Though I irked for elsewhere
 All of the while —

*(Thick my hood and cloak lie,
 You can see no stir
 Of furry horns quivering
 Or green wings awhir)*

Out from their built ring
 I hear the clumsy mirth
 Of those who mask for elfinhood
 As I mask for earth:

They have hired faun-skins
 From a costumer's pile —
 Over my knitting-work
 I watch them and smile . . .

*(But never my own country,
 Wild dancers among —
 They masked me like a human child
 When I was too young!)*



— BALLADS AND LYRICS
 1925

THE NEW moon hung in the sky, the sun was low in the west,
 And my betrothed and I in the churchyard paused to rest —
 Happy maiden and lover, dreaming the old dream over:
 The light winds wandered by, and robins chirped from the nest.

And lo! in the meadow-sweet was the grave of a little child,
 With a crumbling stone at the feet and ivy running wild —
 Tangled ivy and clover folding it over and over:
 Close to my sweetheart's feet was the little mound up-piled.

Stricken with nameless fears, she shrank and clung to me,
 And her eyes were filled with tears for a sorrow I did not see:
 Lightly the winds were blowing, softly her tears were flowing —
 Tears for the unknown years and a sorrow that was to be!

(1836-1907)

Through the darkness comes the melancholy hoot of the barn owl, while nearer some bird is singing very softly — either a blackcap or a sedge warbler. The curlew is saying good-night to the lapwing on the hill. By the edge of the growing corn is heard, iterative and wearisome, the "crake," "crake" of the corncrake.

We wait a little in the shade of the wood, but there are no other sounds or sights to speak to us till we hear the clang of some migratory wild birds going down to the marshes of Loch Moan. Many birds have a night cry quite distinct from their day note. The wood-pigeon has a peculiarly contented chuckle upon his branch, as though he were saying, "This here is jolly comfortable! This just suits *me*!" For the wood-pigeon is a vulgar and slangy bird, and therefore no true Scot, for all that the poets have said about him. He is however a great fighter, exceedingly pugnacious with his kind. Listen and you will hear even at night

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms,"

or rather among the firs, for above all trees the wood-pigeon loves the spruce. But you will find out, if you go nearer, that much of the mystic moaning which sounds so poetic at a distance, consists of squabbings and disputings about vested rights.

"You're shoving me!" says one angry pigeon.

"That is a lie. This is my branch at any rate, and you've no business here. Get off!" replies his neighbor, as quarrelsome to the full as he.

-Scotland, 1895

THE SACRIFICE

Robert W. Chambers

3 went into a field of flowers, whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

Far afield a woman cried, "I have killed him I loved!" and from a jar she poured blood upon the flowers whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

Far afield I followed, and on the jar I read a thousand names, while from within the fresh blood bubbled to the brim.

"I have killed him I loved!" she cried. "The world's athirst; now let it drink!" She passed, and far afield I watched her pouring blood upon the flowers whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

THE GREEN-ROOM

Robert W. Chambers

The Clown turned his powdered face to the mirror.

"If to be fair is to be beautiful," he said, "who can compare to my white mask?"

"Who can compare with him in his white mask?" I asked of Death beside me.

"Who can compare with me?" said Death, "for I am paler still."

"You are very beautiful," sighed the Clown, turning his powdered face from the mirror.

-1895

THE GIRL WHO SLEPT WHEN STORIES WERE READ TO HER

There once was a girl who slept when stories were read to her. She always slept at the most exciting parts and during the climax. She couldn't get to sleep otherwise and went to all the local readings at coffeehouses and the like. When she had a cold, she bubbled at the nose. It disturbed a lot of readings.

One day the girl who slept when stories were read to her woke up in a strange place. She had been transported into a story. It was all about how she slept when people read her stories. She was so embarrassed that she woke up and it was all a dream.

"It's no wonder I fall asleep," she said, "with tales like these."

THE BOY WHO LIFTED WEIGHTS

There was a boy who lifted weights. His muscles were so big he couldn't put his hands in his pockets. He had the ability to flip Volkswagens onto their hoods and he could bend horseshoes if he could find any. The boy who lifted weights shaved the hair off his chest and rubbed olive oil on himself. Other boys looked at him as though he were a salad. One day, the boy who lifted weights was playing football with the fellas. They tackled him but he popped out of the pile-up due to the olive oil. The play was declared a foul because the boy exploded the football in his steely grip and nobody knew he had it wadded in his fist when he slipped between the goal posts. When the boy got old and his spine was brittle, he gave up lifting weights. All his muscles turned to flab and fell down around his knees. He shuffled to the store each day and smelled like he peed his pants. The boy who lifted weights has cancer.

THE GIRL WHO WROTE FABLES

There once was a girl who wrote fables. She wrote hundreds and hundreds of them and they were so common nobody thought they were special. All the little-magazines would ring her up and say, "Send over twenty fables!" and she would say, "What will I be paid?" "Nothing." "Right!" And she would send over twenty fables. They were really the best things of their kind in those days but the magazines only used them to fill up white space at the ends of stories and articles. One day, the girl who wrote fables got them all together in a pile and tried to have them published as a book. "Well," said the publishers, "we've never really published a book with hundreds and hundreds of fables. Why not write a novel instead? It wouldn't have to be very good."

The girl who wrote fables was struck deaf and blind and stupid and ceased writing fables though she wrote a lot of books. People missed the fables in the magazines and felt cheated by the white space the editors were left with instead. After the girl was dead, her fables were reissued in six illustrated volumes and were cherished by everyone forever. Nobody recalls the other things she did.

— Seattle

A i d e d

Mary Elizabeth Counsellman

Let me come in!
It's dark out here where daemons mouth and grin
and whisper things I wasn't warned about
Until too late . . .
Oh, wait!
Don't shut your door!
So many have, before . . .
It's blowing up a storm!
Just let me warm
my ice cold fingers at your family fire
and tell you things I dare not tell a priest
lest he desire . . .
Or Mom. Or Dad.
I wish I had!
Nothing they would have done could equal this:
A daemon's kiss!
Leaving me sick and shamed, and wrongly blamed:
Counting my hours of life
and wondering if a leap, a gun, a knife
Might be a better end . . .
Oh, please don't shut your door,
Friend . . . !

